

FILED

100 9518  
FF16e  
1/1/02

Dear Concerned Citizens:

EPA staff who have worked on environmental issues related to the FMC/Astaris facility over the past several years were surprised and saddened by the announcement that the facility will be closing its operations, and our thoughts are with the families affected by the layoffs. Many of you have expressed concern about what this announcement means for the cleanup of environmental contamination at the facility. I want to assure you that EPA is continuing its work to ensure the public and environmental safety of this site now and in the future. Regardless of the operating status of the company, FMC/Astaris remains responsible for ongoing environmental cleanup work, and has been cooperative in working with our agency to meet these requirements.

We recognize there may be confusion about how the closure announcement affects some the environmental cleanup at the facility. I expect EPA to retain a strong role in the cleanup process based on the two major hazardous waste laws that we are responsible for carrying out, Superfund and RCRA. The following is a summary of a few activities and developments at the site.

- The public comment period on the RCRA Closure and Post-closure Plans for Ponds 17 & 18 has been extended for two weeks to November 16, 2001. These plans provide detailed technical information about how the waste contained in the ponds will be capped to protect groundwater in the area from contamination. Many other ponds at the facility have already been capped in this manner, which EPA considers to be a safe and effective solution for groundwater protection. This comment period follows a recent decision by EPA to allow the company to cap Pond 18 instead of removing the waste and treating it in the LDR Treatment System.
- Work on the Superfund cleanup process for the site will not be significantly affected by the decision to close the facility, and the RCRA process will now shift its focus from issuing a permit for an operating facility, to developing what is referred to as a Post-closure Permit. Both the Superfund and RCRA processes will focus on cleaning up contamination and protecting groundwater supplies.
- A public meeting scheduled for October 23 at the Fort Hall Reservation was cancelled due to the announced closure of the facility. The meeting was to discuss the LDR Treatment System which was being built to treat hazardous wastes produced at the facility. Because the plant will no longer be operating and producing waste, the treatment system will not be built.

EPA will continue to work with the company, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, state and local agencies, and the public to ensure that this site is protected in an environmentally responsible way. Over the coming months, there will be many opportunities for the public to provide input to EPA about its work at the FMC/Astaris facility, and we welcome you to be involved.

Sincerely,

John Iani  
Regional Administrator

*EPA periodically sends out information about the work we are doing in the Pocatello and Fort Hall areas. If you would like to be added to our mailing list to keep up to date on EPA actions, comment periods, public meetings, etc., please contact Charles Bert, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, at (206) 553-0225, or e-mail at [bert.charles@epa.gov](mailto:bert.charles@epa.gov).*